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ABSTRACT

The secondary teacher education program at Ramapo College, scheduled to begin in the fall of 1971, consists of a required 24-credit sequence of ten blocks. Each block is classified as an "inquiry block" or an "action block." Students are required to enroll in an action block for each corresponding inquiry block. Inquiry blocks cover sociology of education, psychology of education, philosophy of education, curriculum development, and teaching methods. Corresponding action blocks provide for field experiences in the community, sensitivity training, writing of research papers, curriculum and instructional materials development, and student teaching. Options in student teaching include teaching in private schools or Job Corps centers, student teaching abroad, or team teaching. In accordance with the school's philosophy of emphasizing preparation in the liberal arts, prospective teachers will not be able to major in education. (RT)

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# TEACHER EDUCATION IN A LIBERAL ARTS CONTEXT

Teacher Education Faculty
Ramapo College of New Jersey

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## TEACHER EDUCATION IN A LIBERAL ARTS CONTEXT

On the occasion of his inauguration to the Presidency in 1965 Lyndon Baines Johnson spoke (it must now seem prophetically) of our age of change -- "rapid and fantastic change ... shaking old values and uprooting old ways."

That Mr. Johnson eventually was overwhelmed by the tide of change is itself noteworthy. But even more significant for the academic community, and for those charged with the preparation of teachers, is the death of the intellectual superstructure which constituted the President's frame of reference. The phenomenon is not new. For many years the comforting beliefs and values of nineteenth century America -- the hopeful ideals of a frontier democracy -- steadily have been eroded away. Older Americans habitually conceptionalized a fixed universe, balanced and harmonious, operating with automatic regularity according to immutable natural laws. God was just, man a creature of dignity and rationality. Moral truths were eternal, immutable. Man's upward progress, although slow and painful, must certainly be inexorable.

Modern science and psychology have vastly altered our perspective. Darwin showed that constant changes in heredity and environment produce an ever-changing world. Einstein's theory blended time and space, replacing the image of a fixed "determined" universe with "Relativity." Meanwhile, disciples of the new Pragmatic faith of James and Dewey proclaimed the mutability of moral truth in the light of human experience. Finally, Freudian psychology dealt a powerful blow to traditional faith in human dignity and rationality, portraying man as a helpless victim of his own ungovernable passions.

This melancholy view, albeit grim and forbidding, remains a profoundly compelling interpretation of today's world. It is the legacy of those who prepare teachers for the nation's schools. In the aggregate it is a mood,

a "new reality," for which teacher educators are required to create new programs -- tougher, leaner, less sentimental. Perhaps more than ever before it is important to draw upon the resources of the entire scholarly community.

Education in the liberal arts long has been recognized as a prerequisite for teaching in the schools. Indeed a commission of the Middle States Association once declared that "teaching, more than any other profession, is liberal education at work ... given direction and insight by professional training."[1] The teacher in this view must be, first of all, an educated person. Today, in the face of dehumanization, cynicism, and despair the liberal arts background of prospective teachers takes on added significance.

In part, the continued vitality of the liberal arts is embodied in "tradition," the accumulated wisdom drawn from man's previous activities, thoughts and endeavor. Such knowledge, when organized into academic disciplines with their varying modes of inquiry and methodology constitutes an important ingredient of academic study. The cultural heritage becomes, in effect, a useful mechanism through which men of the past are enabled to teach men of the future. The studies that result claim a "liberalizing" quality since application to them is said to liberate the mind--to free the individual by equipping him with intellectual skills and habits which themselves are generative of further knowledge. Since a person's formal education cannot be expected to anticipate all the practical situations he will later encounter, it is vital to maximize one's rational powers and develop one's mental and spiritual capacities. Broadly humanizing studies can help students prepare for a lifetime of independent inquiry and the self-discovery of knowledge.

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[1] Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, "Teacher Education in Liberal Arts Colleges," Document No. 4.65, June, 1963.

The transmission of the cultural heritage becomes, therefore, one--but certainly not the only--goal of a liberal arts education. Such information constitutes "working capital" which young people can use in establishing their own individualized windows on reality. As such, the traditional areas of intellectual inquiry and creativity need not be "irrelevant" or "unlifelike." For, as J. Robert Oppenheimer has put it, "Knowledge rests on knowledge; what is new is meaningful because it departs slightly from what was known before."[2]

The cultural heritage in itself, however, no longer constitutes the totality of a college curriculum. The revolutionary events of recent decades render such an outlook less than comprehensive. Men's aspirations have risen. Consequently, today's curricular offerings, while not repudiating the cultural achievements of other eras, reflect a belief that it is not enough for the college merely to transmit knowledge. Nor are the other time-honored scholarly functions entirely sufficient, namely the modification of existing knowledge and the development, through research, of new knowledge. Academicians increasingly speak of a related but somewhat broader goal. It is the scholarly community's responsibility for continually reappraising the cultural order, and perhaps playing a positive role in helping to remake or recreate the culture. By looking at knowledge in new ways, from the standpoint of the common good of society, faculty members and students can help infuse the educational process with a sense of profound purpose. They can encourage the pursuit of knowledge as a lifetime goal for the many, not just the few. This, in turn, can help the larger community to a deeper understanding of its potentiality. Finally, as higher education becomes the expected pattern for greater numbers of Americans, scholars and students can help demonstrate, in historian Lawrence A. Cremin's phrase, that truly "education can be democratized without being vulgarized."

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[2] J. Robert Oppenheimer, Science and the Common Understanding (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1953), p.90.

The liberal arts program at Ramapo College of New Jersey originates in a commitment to use the heritage of past learning in a creative manner today. This carries with it a thoroughgoing belief in curricular experimentation, especially in helping to break down the artificial compartmentalization of knowledge.

To this end the College will be organized in a number of amall learning communities known as Schools, each identified by a distinct interdisiplinary focus. In the School of Human Environment, for example, students and faculty will apply -- sometimes to actual problems -- concepts and methods derived from several disciplines (e.g., biology, economics, urban sociology, and public administration). Each student will be assigned to a faculty Tutor, who will help him plan his program, appraise his progress, and regularly relate his learning experiences to his objectives.

It is anticipated that students and faculty, working together in relatively small instructional units, will become involved as partners in a community of scholarship and learning. Such a setting is calculated to encourage the cultivation of individual intelligence and creativity. At the same time, pre-professional programs are not neglected at Ramapo. One of those which will receive special attention is teacher education.

## TEACHER EDUCATION AT RAMAPO COLLEGE

The teacher education program at Ramapo College is established within the context of a profound commitment to the ideals and tradition of the liberal arts and sciences. It is intended to prepare secondary-school teachers well grounded in their subject specialties who are also knowledgeable and technically proficient at a basic level in the craft of teaching and sensitive to the young people they will teach.

No major is available in teacher education at Ramapo. Students are expected to complete a sequence of sixteen credit hours in a prescribed professional sequence plus student teaching. Students not enrolled in the teacher education program may register for up to four credits in education with permission of their Tutor and the chairman of the Teacher Education Admissions Committee.

Pre-service teachers will be helped to recognize in their course work that their first responsibility is to become educated persons, and that no teacher can purport to lead others in knowledge he has not himself mastered. Building on this reservoir of knowledge, the professional education sequence is designed to translate experience in the liberal arts into action in secondary-school classrooms.

Through the satisfaction of state certification requirements the program will provide an additional career opportunity for students with concentrations in Language Arts (including foreign languages and a "contemporary arts" cluster), Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Detailed information on New Jersey certification may be obtained from faculty advisers in teacher education.

Professional preparation is both theoretical and practical. From a theoretical standpoint undergraduate teacher education involves: (1) at least introductory knowledge of the phenomena of learning; (2) familiarity with certain crucial philosophical, historical, and sociological concerns of education; (3) familiarity with the characteristics of pupiis in various age groups.

Initial preparation for teaching also includes such practical experiences as: (1) directed observation of skillful teacher-practitiones att work; (2) exposure to and practice with a variety of teaching techniques; (3) activities with parents and young people in the community setting; and, (4) the actual planning and management of classroom instruction.

With regard to these objectives, students preparing for New Jersey state certification will be invited to share in the life of the general scholarly community. Clearly, they will need depth in the strategies and modes of inquiry of one academic discipline or cluster of related disciplines. It is important, too, for them to understand alternative ways in which the key concepts of a discipline may be organized for classroom instruction. What is implied is awareness of subject content not just at the secondary school level (the level at which presumably they will teach) but in a vertically integrated fashion from kindergarten through the twelfth grade. If, as psychologist Jerome Bruner has advanced, "any subject can be taught effectively to any child in some intellectually honest form at any stage of development," then preservice teachers should be prepared to deal with such a "spiral curriculum." This suggests advanced knowledge of the underlying principles that give structure to a discipline; it also requires an awareness of which specific teaching methods are appropriate for teaching a concept such as "set theory" in mathematics or "style" in literature at any given stage of student readiness for learning. Teachers working at one level of instruction cannot

ignore other levels if sequential learning is to be achieved.

Questions of curriculum theory and practice ("what is to be taught in the schools and how"?) represent a central theme in the teacher education approach at Ramapo. A concerted effort will be made to employ the disciplines of knowledge in still another way. Some educational problems clearly are susceptible to study in the light of their historical development and the philosophical issues to which they are related (e.g., the nature and aims of education, the curriculum, the organization and administration of a school system, and the process of teaching and learning).[3] Others can be studied from the perspective of psychology, sociology, anthropology, economics, and political science. In each instance the methods and findings of these humanistic and behavioral disciplines may be applied fruitfully to the study of educational issues.

Traditional teacher education approaches have tended to use the so-called "educational foundations" courses in history, philosophy, and behavioral sciences to establiish a context for the culminating experience of student teaching in the schools. At Ramapo such subjects will continue to provide a context for the understanding and interpretation of educational problems, but another dimension will be added: a heavy reliance on field experience and direct contact with pupils from the time a student is first admitted to the teacher education program.

With respect to field work, Ramapo students and faculty members will share experiences in public schools and, whenever possible, in such alternative settings as community agencies, Job Corps centers, correctional institutions, and international education centers. What is intended is to make the entire community their laboratory, a practical embodiment of the theoretical con-depts they encounter in readings, lectures, and discussions.

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[3] See American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), Recommended Standards for Teacher Education (Washington, D. C.; AACET, 1970). The following discussion draws heavily on the AACTE-NCATE recommendations.

Indeed, a principal feature of the sequence is the creation of "Action" blocks--planned clusters of experiences in the laboratory or the field to parallel theoretical or "inquiry" experiences of students in the classroom. This recognition of the reciprocity between theory and practice is a vital aspect of the Ramapo approach to teacher education. That it is sustained with fidelity throughout the prescribed program, for every course offered, is unusual in American education today.

Practical experiences not only will begin earlier in a student's preparation (see Block I and II in outline of courses), but whenever possible they will be scheduled directly in the schools. Hopefully, as a result of this emphasis on the practical, the College's recommendation for the certification of a particular student will be less dependent on his accumulation of traditional course credits than with his having demonstrated expertise in teaching young people.

In addition to a broad background in the liberal arts, in-depth knowledge of a subject area, and familiarity with the historical, philosophical and psychological foundations of education, there is a body of practical knowledge about teaching which is fundamental to effective classroom practice. These often are referred to as teaching "methods." Again, however, clinical experiences are not to be separated from theoretical conceptualizations. For example, in Block IV of the course descriptions below ("New Curricula" and "Curriculum Laboratory") it should be noted that practical problems in the teaching of a subject will be introduced, but not without reference to theory. Much of the methodology of teaching is to be investigated within the framework of this reciprocal relationship between theory and practice. Students will be assisted in planning lessons, selecting and creating learning resources, motivating pupils, presenting lessons, diagnosing learning difficulties, individualizing instruction, and evaluating both their own progress and that of their pupils.

In the past many have regarded the student teaching experience as the most meaningful part of the teacher education curriculum, since it placed the student in an actual classroom situation. It was the capstone of the professional education sequence. Often, however, it came too late for some students to discover that teaching was not what they expected. Today, because of video-tape recording, micro-teaching, and various techniques for simulating the classroom setting it is possible for prospective teachers to participate directly in the diagnosis and "treatment" of their own problems as recorded, viewed, and reviewed--all by means of the new electronic devices. These technological advances signal a significant departure from older approaches to teacher education. Although vicarious, they provide a useful stepping stone to student teaching. Thus, pre-service teachers at Ramapo will have help in making a more realistic self appraisal of their personal strengths and career potential on a continuing basis.[4]

Student teaching still must play a crucial role in pre-service education. It is the period of extended experience in professional practice during which the student applies most intensively the theory he has learned. It is here that under the guidance of one or a number of experienced teachers, working alone or in a team of student teachers, he actually develops his individual style. He assumes a major responsibility for the full range of teaching duties in a real school situation. Student teaching or some parallel form of internship is more comprehensive and demanding than the clinical experiences comprising the "action" dimension of Block IV. Supervision is closer, and it is assumed that students will be more advanced, more sophisticated about both their subject and teaching methodology.

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[4] A "Materials and Media" center will be maintained in cooperation with the College library, affording students an opportunity to develop competence in the use of the new instructional media and familiarity with current curriculum materials used in the schools. This activity will receive particular stress in Action Block IV (see course listings below).

On a voluntary basis a portion of the student teaching experience may be scheduled in a setting other than the public schools. Among these alternative settings are independent schools, parochial schools and Job Corps centers. The use of teaching teams in which several student teachers co-operate under the guidance of an experienced instructor is considered especially desirable. Opportunities of this kind have been made possible by special arrangement with local school systems.

Two other aspects of the teacher preparation sequence at Ramapo deserve special mention. First, students will be given a variety of opportunities to familiarize themselves with the international component in education. This includes educational problems and practices in other lands, cooperative action programs for which they are eligible, and the implications for education in the United States of such ideas as the British "open school" movement. The college is undertaking initiatives intended to make an overseas teaching experience feasible for at least some students.

Finally, while primary attention will be focused on logical and cognitive educational processes in the Ramapo program, students will have ample exposure to intuitive and appreciative experiences. Especially in the establishment of the Human Relations Laboratory (see Block II) recognition is given to the affective dimension of human personality--to attitudes, feelings, affection, understanding. Activities will take place largely in small groups, whose dynamics will be studied as part of the instructional process. No compromise of intellectual standards is involved here, merely a recognition that man, although a rational being, is also an emotional being--requiring fulfillment and gratification.

## OPERATION OF THE TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

Administrative procedures for the operation of Ramapo College's Teacher Education Program conform to recommended guidelines jointly promulgated by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). The Teacher Education Division is an independent unit organized parallel to the Division of Community Services and Professional Programs and encompasses as its responsibility, too, the operation of the College's physical education program.

### Faculty:

As recommended by AACTE/NCATE, faculty members have been recruited whose backgrounds include post-master's degree preparation in specializations appropriate to their teaching assignments. Specialization of training is sufficient to ensure competent instruction in the "Inquiry" areas listed above and adequate supervision for students by subject matter specialists in laboratory, clinical and practical (or "Action") experiences.

Ramapo College recognizes the need to provide faculty members with conditions of service which make efficient use of their competence, time, and energy. Loads are limited to twelve hours and provision is made for an adjustment in load for non-teaching activities. This is important since each faculty member is asked to spend some of his time in the schools or the community.

In the teacher education unit, as at Ramapo College generally, teaching is viewed as a faculty member's primary concern, although research is encouraged. One channel for improving both teaching and research will be the Faculty Seminar in Teacher Education. It will serve as an arena for faculty members to present to their colleagues (and sometimes to students) research papers, recordings, video-tapes, or summary reports concerning their

current activities in research or development. On occasion, the faculty will come together in the Seminar to share in common some pertinent book, film, play, or travel experience.

Students:

Teacher preparation institutions owe a special responsibility to the larger community in the standards they apply in admitting, retaining, and recommending for certification the pre-service teachers in their charge. At Ramapo the teacher education faculty will place substantial weight on the recommendation of a student's Tutor as to whether he should be accepted into the teacher education program. This is feasible because at Ramapo the Tutor is more than just a program adviser at registration time. He has broad responsibilities on a continuing basis for the students associated with him--for their orientation, counseling, and intellectual development. All applications for admission to the Teacher Education Program will be reviewed by a committee of the teacher education faculty. A personal interview is required.

Retention in the teacher education program will be based on several factors. Among these will be a student's academic success in his major liberal arts field. Just as important, however, will be reports of his performance in the community workshop and his other laboratory, clinical, and student teaching experiences.

The progress of a student through the professional sequence will be followed carefully by a teacher preparation faculty adviser who will, in addition, provide liaison with the student's Tutor. The adviser will help, too, to inform him of opportunities available for graduate study and for employment in teaching.

Resources:

Ramapo College is committed to the establishment of an adequate environment for its teacher education program. The College's new library is imaginatively designed and will incorporate advanced technological facilities. The library's holdings in teacher education will include a comprehensive collection of standard books and periodicals in education, as well as specialized materials recommended by individual faculty members, by professional organizations and learned societies, and by nationally recognized lists of such materials. The Director of Libraries at Ramapo has energetically solicited the assistance of the Ramapo faculty and planning staff in the development of general and specialized collections.

Mention has already been made of the Materials and Media Center in the library. This facility and its staff will assist pre-service teachers in acquiring skill in working with modern instructional devices and techniques. Faculty members in teacher education will be encouraged to use such equipment and materials in their teaching and to make recommendations for maintaining and improving the center.

Evaluation, Program Review, and Planning:

Ramapo's teacher education program is to undergo continuous evaluation and modification. This will take place through studies of the program's graduates, as well as through evaluative and consultive services provided by professional organizations in the teacher preparation field. Within the College, a Teacher Education Advisory Committee will assist in the work of review and planning. It will be composed of education and liberal arts faculty members and student representatives.

## COURSES IN TEACHER EDUCATION TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED FOR 1971-72

Courses in the education sequence approximate the minimum credit requirements for New Jersey certification at the secondary-school level. Therefore, all courses are required.

Students must enroll concurrently in an Action Block section for each corresponding Inquiry Block in the sequence.

Students may enroll in only one four credit professional preparation block during their Freshman year.

Action and Inquiry Blocks I and II are prerequisites for all other courses, but students may choose to begin the sequence with either Block I or Block II. Student teaching normally is the final required course experience in the program.

Through continuing working arrangements it will be possible to accept toward minimum certification requirements credit earned at other colleges and universities in the Metropolitan area. Opportunities also exist to satisfy some prerequisites in the Ramapo education sequence through examination.

INQUIRY BLOCK I

School and Community (2 cr.)
An examination of the place, function and authority of the school as a social institution, and of its relation to non-school agencies. Topics will include: the school as a factor in social change; social class and education; race and nationality in American education; the international dimension of education.

ACTION BLOCK I

Community Workshop (2 cr.)
Field experiences in a variety of off-campus locations and including such activities as tutoring, community service, and work as student aide or with social agencies serving youth. Individual placement and time requirement will depend on other aspects of the student's program.

INQUIRY BLOCK II
The Learner and Learning ( 2 cr.)

The principles underlying behavior and personality development from birth through adolescence with emphasis on their application to the classroom. Topics include theories of learning, physical and emotional growth of the child, group dynamics, evaluation and measurement, and the psychology of exceptional children.

ACTION BLOCK II
Human Relations Laboratory (2 cr.)

An investigation of the affective domain of education. The nature and values of group experience in the schools, group interaction and interaction analysis, the dynamics of behavior. Practice in the development of human relations skills. Experiences in self-awareness as a means for acquiring greater sensitivity to the learner.

INQUIRY BLOCK III
Alternative Educational Models (2 cr.)

Conflicting interpretations of the educational process, including the naturalistic, idealistic, pragmatic, and realistic views. The bearing of these interpretations on the function of education, subject matter, and class procedure. Readings in educational thought from Plato to such current educational critics as Holt, Friedenberg, Koerner and Bestor.

ACTION BLOCK III
Philosophy Workshop (2 cr.)

Applications of philosophy in the classroom. Guest speakers, panels, debates, discussions of readings and lectures. Students will develop position papers individually and in small groups.

INQUIRY BLOCK IV
New Curricula (2 cr.)

A colloquium considering the organization of the disciplines of knowledge for teaching in elementary and secondary schools. Current experimentation in curriculum patterns and content. Instructional procedures and problems common to the various subject fields.

ACTION BLOCK IV
Curriculum Laboratory (2 cr.)

Special aims, problems and methods of teaching a subject in the schools. Topics include: course, unit, and lesson planning; adapting content, methods and materials to individual differences; evaluation techniques and instruments. Particular emphasis will be placed on the development of original instructional materials required by the expansion of curriculum areas and to the exploration of innovations in use of teaching-learning aids. This block will desirably be conducted off-campus in a limited number of designated locations, although, if necessary, it will be conducted on-campus. The Materials and Media Center will be used extensively.

INQUIRY BLOCK V
Student Teaching Seminar (2 cr.)

Seminar providing analysis of questions, issues, and problems encountered in the student teaching experience. Group and individual conferences and reports.

ACTION BLOCK V
Student Teaching (6 cr.)

Supervised observation and student teaching in secondary schools (junior and senior high schools) in the field of major preparation. A portion of the student teaching experience may be scheduled in a setting other than the public schools on a voluntary basis. Whenever possible placement in the schools will be arranged in the form of teaching teams. Student teaching normally involves a student's half time involvement for a college semester.